

Remarks

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Office Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 6-14, 16-18, and 27-29 remain pending in this application, with Claims 1 and 2 being independent. Claims 1, 2, 6-8 and 16-18 have been amended herein.

Initially, Applicant's undersigned representative wishes to thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended during the personal interview of January 13, 2009. During the interview, the 35 U.S.C. § 112 and § 102 rejections were discussed, as summarized in detail below.

In the Office Action dated October 17, 2008, Claims 1, 2, 6-14, 16-18, and 27-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. During the interview, the points raised by the Examiner in the U.S.C. § 112 rejection were discussed. It was agreed to delete "already connected" from Claim 1, clarify the blocking position recited in the claims, provide clear antecedent basis for the "bar", and revise recitation of the terms "it" and "its". In addition, it was explained that the bar connector assembly is for receiving and positioning one or more bars. The changes discussed during the interview have been made herein. Further changes have been made to provide even more structural features in the claims. For example, the seat section and the retainer are now described as having mateable surfaces.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that the claims even more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of Applicant's invention. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 112, second paragraph, rejection are requested.

Claims 1, 2, 6-14, 16-18, and 27-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 1,672,867 (Bazeley et al.). Claims 1, 2, 6-14, 16-18, and 27-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 271,141 (Simons et al.). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As discussed during the interview, Bazeley et al. and Simons et al. are both directed to chain links and chain links differ functionally and structurally from the bar connector assembly of Applicant's invention. Nevertheless, in order to further clarify the differences between Applicant's invention and the applied art, Claims 1 and 2 have been further amended to recite that the seat section and the retainer have transversely extending mateable surfaces by which the retainer and the seat section are progressively secured together by sideways sliding engagement of the mateable surfaces from a laterally offset position. In Bazeley et al., the chainlink is closed by rotating member B 90° relative to link body A in the first embodiment. In Simons et al., sidebar B connects to link A and a bolt or rivet E is inserted to secure link A and bar B in a relative position. Neither these citations is believed to disclose or suggest progressively securing a retainer and seat section together by sideways sliding engagement of mateable surfaces from a laterally offset position, as is recited in the independent claims.

Accordingly, Bazeley et al. and Simons et al. fail to disclose or suggest important features of the present invention recited in the independent claims.

During the interview, the Examiner mentioned several other patent documents to be considered. These documents have all been reviewed, but are not believed to be any more relevant than the citations discussed above.

Thus, Claims 1 and 2 are patentable over the citations of record.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 102 rejections are respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the present invention is patentably defined by independent Claims 1 and 2. Dependent Claims 6-14, 16-18, and 27-29 are also allowable, in their own right, for defining features of the present invention in addition to those recited in their respective independent claims. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is requested.

Applicant submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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